



The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States

Scholar's note: The suggested selections from this sourcebook address varying aspects of the history of Islam in America during the first half of the twentieth century. While there are interesting points of discussion in each of the sections, it may be more fruitful to discuss certain themes that run through the selections as a whole.

What did America mean for Webb, Mary Juma, Mike Abdallah, Inayat Khan, Noble Drew Ali, and Elijah Muhammad?

What do you think accounts for the differences and similarities in the way in which they experienced and understood America?

These selections were written at a time when there was much enthusiasm, particularly in the United States, about the general trajectory of human history toward modernity and progress. The authors you read, however, all present Islam as a solution to some sort of deficit in their personal lives or in sociopolitical life of America.

- Specify the problems they identify for which they see Islam as a solution.
- Discuss why you think there is a disparity between their approach to the modern world and the general celebration of modernity in the first decades of the twentieth century.
- Certainly racial inequality was a problem with which these authors grappled, but their experiences of race allowed them to identify problem beyond racism. Be sure to push your discussion beyond the problem of racial prejudice.

How do the readings by Malcolm X and W.D. Mohammad mark a new trajectory in the history of Islam in America? Explore how they interpret the earlier presence of Islam in black America in relation to the future of African American Islam, which they wish to incarnate.